

To: Brown, Matthew[MBrown@ap.org]
Cc: Elliott, Dan[delliott@ap.org]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
From: StClair, Christie
Sent: Mon 10/26/2015 11:38:45 PM
Subject: Re: RE:

Hi Matt, Nancy has been working on these today and can give you an update.

Christie

Christie St. Clair

Office of Public Affairs

Environmental Protection Agency

o: 202-564-2880

m: 202-768-5780

On Oct 26, 2015, at 7:06 PM, "Brown, Matthew" <MBrown@ap.org> wrote:

Hi Christie-Checking in on response to questions/info request from Friday....Here they are again:

As discussed, looking for more information on following items:

1. Further details on the decision not to use a drill rig to check water conditions inside Gold King. Specifically, please provide any cost estimate(s) of using a drill rig at the site, an explanation of how timing was a factor, details of what safety and technical issues were at play.
2. Regarding the Bureau of Reclamation's Technical Evaluation of the Gold King spill, pages 44 and 45 include mention of communications between the EPA OSC and BOR's Mike Gobla. The OSC apparently told Mr. Gobla he was "unsure about the plans for the Gold King Mine" and requested an outside review of the EPA?DRMS plans. Prior to a planned meeting with Mr. Gobla on Aug. 14, according to the report, work at the mine began. The report also mentions the EPA OSC going on vacation. What was the OSC unsure about? Why did the work begin prior to the planned meeting with BOR? How the OSC's upcoming vacation factor in to all this?

3. Attachment to this message is an email chain that discusses purchase of a piezometer, presumably for testing water pressure. Was this intended for use at Gold King mine? Was it obtained? Was it used? If so, what were the results? Would it be used in conjunction with drilling a bore hole or is that not necessary?

Please let us know-

Matt Brown

Matthew Brown

Associated Press Correspondent

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From: StClair, Christie [<mailto:StClair.Christie@epa.gov>]

Sent: Friday, October 23, 2015 11:28 AM

To: Brown, Matthew

Cc: Grantham, Nancy; Elliott, Dan

Subject: RE:

Thanks, Matt. Will look into these for you.

Christie St. Clair

Office of Public Affairs

Environmental Protection Agency

Washington, DC

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From: Brown, Matthew [<mailto:MBrown@ap.org>]

Sent: Friday, October 23, 2015 1:24 PM

To: StClair, Christie <StClair.Christie@epa.gov>

Cc: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>; Elliott, Dan <delliott@ap.org>

Subject:

Hi Christie-

As discussed, looking for more information on following items:

1. Further details on the decision not to use a drill rig to check water conditions inside Gold King. Specifically, please provide any cost estimate(s) of using a drill rig at the site, an explanation of how timing was a factor, details of what safety and technical issues were at play.
2. Regarding the Bureau of Reclamation's Technical Evaluation of the Gold King spill, pages 44 and 45 include mention of communications between the EPA OSC and BOR's Mike Gobla. The OSC apparently told Mr. Gobla he was "unsure about the plans for the Gold King Mine" and requested an outside review of the EPA's DRMS plans. Prior to a planned meeting with Mr. Gobla on Aug. 14, according to the report, work at the mine began. The report also mentions the EPA OSC going on vacation. What was the OSC unsure about? Why did the work begin prior to the planned meeting with BOR? How the OSC's upcoming vacation factor in to all this?
3. Attachment to this message is an email chain that discusses purchase of a piezometer, presumably for testing water pressure. Was this intended for use at Gold King mine? Was it obtained? Was it used? If so, what were the results? Would it be used in conjunction with drilling a bore hole or is that not necessary?

Thanks as always for the help.

Matt Brown

Matthew Brown

Associated Press Correspondent

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From: StClair, Christie [<mailto:StClair.Christie@epa.gov>]

Sent: Thursday, October 22, 2015 6:59 PM

To: Brown, Matthew; Elliott, Dan

Cc: Grantham, Nancy

Subject: Making sure you have this

Matt and Dan, just making sure you had the additional statement from Nancy on the drill rig. As you know, our internal report has greater detail on how the site conditions affected this decision.

Please attribute to Nancy Grantham:

Regarding the decision by EPA not to use a drill rig to bore into the Gold King Mine (GKM) from above and directly determine the level of the mine pool, EPA's GKM Internal Review Team found that site conditions made it difficult to undertake such drilling to determine pressure within the mine. The Review Team identified technical challenges, safety, timing, and cost as factors in considering this technique—and also identified the steepness and instability of slopes at the site as a key safety consideration.

Thanks,

Christie

Off the record - We would also call to your attention to pg 69, 3rd paragraph, of the DOI report which concludes that "eventually even if no action had been taken, it may have failed on its own.

Christie St. Clair

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